

*the Hello*ACACIA FRATERNITY *at the* UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

UNDER CONTRACT: ACACIA'S OWN HOME

I am humbled by what you, the alumni of Acacia Illinois, have accomplished. As previously reported, you pledged \$1.5 million toward the purchase of a permanent chapter house and have freely given \$1.1 million to date. On behalf of myself, my fellow Alumni Board members and the dedicated group of our fellow alumni who have been actively working on the campaign, please accept our heartfelt appreciation and thanks for your commitment thus far to our fraternity.

Your continuing commitment to Acacia at the University of Illinois is why we have maintained an uninterrupted presence in Champaign for more than 100 years in spite of significant hurdles thrown our way. The donation of your time and treasure evidences this commitment and ensures our existence. Your continued support, perseverance and belief that young men today should be able to choose a brotherhood like ours as we so chose when we were students has kept us going. Many constituents within the University question our purpose and right to exist on today's campus. Your commitment and generosity has seen and will see that our future is bright and our beloved fraternity will continue to favorably influence the lives of young men in Champaign for some time to come.

As you may or may not know, roughly seven years ago, **Art Mertes '85** called a meeting in Chicago to discuss the closing of Acacia Illinois.

I attended that meeting with a handful of my classmates and we had a hard time coming to grips with the prospect of losing our fraternity at the University of Illinois. I was shocked at the youth of the board members and the lack of broader alumni



The view from Armory, looking northwest.

participation. I felt I had no one to blame but myself as I was not contributing money to Acacia nor participating in any way with the Alumni Board. I therefore felt I had no right to criticize so I decided to join the board and see if we could keep our organization alive. From that meeting forward, many have stepped up to the challenge. We have raised \$1.5 million despite today's economic climate and many of you have also worked hard toward acquiring a permanent home for Acacia in Champaign.

Thanks to your support, I now have the pleasure of reporting to you that we are close to achieving our ultimate capital campaign goal of procuring a new permanent chapter house.

Our New Chapter House

On December 19, 2011 we entered into a Purchase and Sale Agreement for the purchase of a house at 302 E. Armory (Armory and Third). We have commenced due diligence investigations and are in the process of seeking financing commitments for this purchase. Subject to completing these efforts the closing is scheduled for May 31, 2012 with the active chapter occupying the new house during August 2012. The property was built in 1929 for Theta Upsilon Omega fraternity and is in good overall condition. Phi Mu acquired the property in 1946 and expanded it in 1967. The layout is conducive to what we all knew as fraternity living and the active

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UNDER CONTRACT

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viable option. We estimated that a new 15,000 square-foot facility housing at least 50 active members would have a minimum construction cost of \$2,250,000 (\$150/sq.-ft.) plus \$250,000 for niceties and amenities plus land and additional soft costs. We projected the minimum total new development project cost of not less than \$4.1 million which includes an expected land cost of \$1.6 million, based upon available land sites.

We evaluated thirty-one properties during our search and seriously considered ten of them. We tried to and would have loved buying the Beta house in which the chapter currently resides as it would have been the best option in terms of size and location, but the Beta's simply won't sell and we don't believe we should risk losing the 302 E. Armory opportunity with no indication that the Beta's will ever change their mind. A number of seriously considered properties such as the Chi Psi Lodge at 110 E. Armory, 907 S. Third Street (a former rented home of Acacia) and three adjacent houses located on 1st Street north of Chalmers would have been too costly requiring, in addition to the purchase prices, demolition of existing buildings and new construction yielding total project costs of between \$3.85 and \$4.35 million. We looked at vacant land located at 4th Street and Daniel, but a \$2 million asking price would have pushed the project costs up to \$5 million. We also looked a number of smaller available houses which would have housed only 30-35 members and deemed them too small for our needs. We also made a run at the ΣAE house which was Acacia's home for a number of years, which while smaller would have been a financially attractive project, but ΣAE simply wouldn't sell.

Based on information sourced from campus representatives of the organizations, the renovation or rebuilding project costs for Theta Xi, Pikes, ZBT and Evans Scholars were in the \$3.5 million to \$4.5 million range. If these organizations didn't already own the land, their project costs would have been pushed up to the \$6 million range.

The price to acquire 302 E. Armory and related personal property is \$2.7 million. The property requires some improvements, but we will not be faced with complete renovation or tear down/rebuild cost exposures. I do not believe we will find a better opportunity for less money. The other options we have looked at are in the not less than \$4 million all-in cost range.



Lower Level



Second and Third Floors of Western Building

If we want to own a property, the Board believes we have to move forward on this opportunity and appeal to our alumni to make it happen.

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MAN-UP: Returning the House to Its Fraternity Roots

by Ken Wagner '55

302 E. Armory promises to be an excellent permanent home for Acacia at Illinois. Condition of the property is very good and it is complete down to the pots and pans in the kitchen. Our initial inspection on January 5, 2012 revealed well managed maintenance over the years with only minor items to address.

The house was originally built in 1929 as a fraternity for Theta Upsilon Omega. Phi Mu took it over in 1946 and built an addition in 1967 east of the original house with a connecting link on the lower level. Current capacity of the original structure is 19 and 38 men can be accommodated in the addition.

The task to accomplish for occupancy next August will be the conversion of the house from a sorority back to a fraternity. Phi Mu “feminized” the decor and furnishings over the years. Considerable redecorating and furnishing are needed to “man-up” the house, making it a venerable residence for the men of Acacia and a place where the alumni brothers will be proud to return year after year.

The main, first floor, has a large living room, beautiful fireplace and heavy timber beamed ceiling. A sunroom at the north end of the first floor is reminiscent of 501 E. Daniel where many of us played ping-pong years ago. A large foyer, also with timber-

beamed ceiling, lies between the entry, living room and stairs to the floors above. A housemother’s suite (subject to conversion), library and guest bathroom complete the first floor. A dining room and large multi-purpose room are on the lower level with exposures to a large sunken courtyard between the original house and the addition to the east. The lower level also houses the kitchen, ample storage, boiler and mechanical equipment. The two-story addition provides study/bedrooms, toilet/shower facilities, storage and laundry rooms.

Much planning will take place between now and the closing in May 2012. Use of spaces will be determined, decor and furnishings decided and necessary modifications identified - all so the actual work can be accomplished this summer. Longer-range plans will be made for future upgrades and improvements as necessary to meet expectations.

This is an exciting time for Acacia at Illinois and we can all be a part of this important step. The Corporation Board and Active Chapter are already working together on the plans for conversion of the property from sorority to fraternity. Your thoughts, ideas and comments are invited.



The view from 3rd Street, looking southeast.

Hello Editor’s Note:

Ken Wagner '55 is a welcomed, recent addition to the Alumni Corporation Board. Ken attended U of I from 1954 through 1959 and earned a B.A. in Architecture. His professional career was based out of Davenport, IA for 8 years and in the Chicago area for 40 years. He completed both domestic and international architectural projects with the last 25 years of his career primarily focused on secondary and higher education projects throughout northern Illinois, many at the University of Illinois in Chicago and Northern Illinois University in DeKalb. Ken retired in 2007.

Ken married “a wonderful gal” - the late Jo Anne Wagner (1995) - who attended U. of Iowa in 1958. Ken and Jo Anne are parents to a daughter (later a “Little Sister of Acacia” at Illinois) and a son, who both currently live in the Chicago area.

President's Perspectives

Alumni's Necessary Role in Acacia's Progress and Success

by Art Mertes '85

In the course of my 20+ years as a volunteer serving the Chapter and our Alumni, I have the following insights to share with each of you who might care to listen. I believe my perspective is unique, having lived in the old 501 E. Daniel Chapter House, the rebuilt 501 E. Daniel Chapter House, having seen our fine group work its way to 907 S. Third, 211 E. Daniel (ΣAE), and 201 E. Daniel (Betas) in the course of 25+ years. If you would have told me as an undergraduate student this would be our path, I would have scoffed at the idea. One thing is clear - our Alumni's ability to remain involved in Chapter education, discipline and support with principles of leadership and Acacia's teachings, have made it possible

for our Chapter to survive and I dare say, thrive in an environment that is constantly critical of high-profile Greek fraternities. Our Alumni Board has learned what positions and things seem to support strong recruitment, grades, leadership, balance of the social with the academic, and the essential principles of Acacia that mean the difference between success and failure of our organization. I will not fool myself into believing that we will never again face adversity, but I can honestly say that we have managed to face adversity and grow stronger as a group - both Alumni and Chapter - because of it. That is the essence of strong leadership and a strong organization. That is Acacia Fraternity at the University of Illinois.

If I were to recite some of the core understandings we the Alumni Board have learned along our path, I would point out the following as critical elements that have helped the Acacia organization accomplish:

- Consistent and regular Alumni interaction with leadership of the Chapter
- Retreat-style program(s) at the beginning of each school year coordinated with Acacia International Fraternity focused on core values and development
- House Director / property management position staffed with a competent liaison

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The view of the entrance from Armory.

UNDER CONTRACT

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It is the judgment of the Alumni Board that the acquisition opportunity for 302 E. Armory is the best choice we've come across in after what amounts to over seven years of active searching. The Board believes this is a place located in Champaign's "Magic Quadrant" that we would all be proud to call home. Additionally, this property will for the first time in over 25 years provide the opportunity to have the majority of our 110-125 active members living together once again. This property has a capacity of 57 compared to the Beta House at 50. We expect about fifty-seven actives to move in next fall. We currently have 48 living in the Beta House.

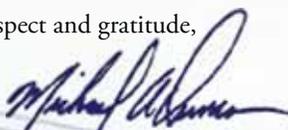
David Thies '73 has donated the legal work for the property search and acquisition. **Ken Wagner '55**, our architect alum, has graciously donated his professional services. We are most thankful for their contributions. Thanks to **Art Mertes '85**, **Dan Bayston '80**, **Mel Rapp '49**, **Adam Powers '98**, **Michael Conniff '93**, **Dennis Bone '02**, **Drew Millard '98**, **Phil Chapman '71** and the rest of the current and past Alumni Board for their prior and ongoing efforts to ensure the fraternity's success and efforts to consummate this transaction. Others aiding the Board, such as **Joe Main '73**, **Steve Hoffner '72** and **Paul Ruby '72** also are worthy of recognition for their help. I would be very remiss if I didn't thank **Jim Wormley '60**, as our lead donor, for all he has contributed to the success of our efforts.

In the words of Phil Chapman, "Together, we can accomplish great things."

We have much to do before we can close on or before May 31, 2012 and you will be hearing more about this shortly.

Thank you for your continued interest and support. We will be contacting you shortly about our future plans with more on how you can help us make the ownership and plans for our new chapterhouse a reality.

With much respect and gratitude,



Mike Duncan '74

PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVES

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- Continuing improvements in programming and initiation
- New Initiate breakfast with Alumni for each and every new initiate class
- Enhanced accounting oversight by third party service providers
- Scholarship awards program
- Protective positions regarding appropriate activities at the Chapter House vs. off-site
- Strong system of contracting, with In-House and Out-of-House contracts, Conduct & Damage Assessment Agreements, House Rules, Parental Guarantee, Code of Conduct, Records Release
- Strong relationship with and support by the Acacia International Fraternity
- Relationship development with University governance
- Volunteered time / support from a larger Alumni Board
- Financial Support from our Alumni, both in the House Purchase Capital Campaign and our Annual Campaigns

What I want to make sure that you know, at all times, is that each of your continuing contributions makes a difference and has a positive impact on the future success of our organization. This has proven to be the case for the last 20+ years of my involvement, and will continue to be the case with your support and involvement. I respectfully request each Alumnus from my era and earlier to dispose of any last lingering negative sentiments about loss of 501 E. Daniel - we have come a long way since. I ask each of you to reflect on the good feelings and principles that you developed as a life member of the Acacia Fraternity at the University of Illinois, and to consider what more you might be able to do for Acacia in securing its future continued success. With your support, Acacia Fraternity at the University of Illinois is here to stay, and with the acquisition of a permanent Chapter House we will have plans for a new Alumni space designated for our returning Alum as a proud memory and place to reminisce about your relationship with Acacia Fraternity.

Special thanks to those who donated to the Capital Campaign

Acacia Legends

\$500,000 - \$1,000,000
James T. Wormley '60

Acacia Guardians

\$100,000 - \$499,999
Anonymous

Acacia Benefactors

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CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

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\$1 - \$499

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Sean E. Luderer '97

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Todd D. Wallin '98

William R. Wiebmer '43

Michael Williamson '99

Kurt A. Wolter '83

W. Stephen Yaw '63



The living room.



The dining room.



The courtyard.

To add your name to the list, contact our Capital Campaign Chairmen, **Dan Bayston '80** (dan.bayston@cognient.com, 312-560-2124) or **Mike Duncan '74** (mduncan@patcap.com, 312-601-7610).



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Help us keep our alumni records up-to-date! Parents, please forward this newsletter to your son. Alumni, edit your member profile online at www.AcaciaIllinois.com, or clip this form, place it in a stamped envelope and send to: Acacia Fraternity, University of Illinois #1151, PO Box 2187, Columbus, GA 31902.

Name _____

Roll Number _____

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The view from Armory, looking northeast.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!



Join Your Brothers at
HOMECOMING!
October 27, 2012
Illinois vs. Indiana